PACS 002

12:30 What is Good Food?

The structure of this course closely replicates Pacific Seminar I and focuses on the personal, social, political and environmental consequences of the modern diet. The food that we eat is one of the strongest markers of identity and literally becomes us. Sharing meals is the primal bonding experience we have within families as well as in social, ethnic and religious groups. The food that is grown, processed and traded also constitutes a major sector of the global economy and the most important way we interact with the planet. Diet therefore provides a unique and all-encompassing approach to many of the most pressing problems of our world today. Furthermore, we routinely categorize foods as good or bad. What exactly do we mean by these terms? Do we mean they taste good or bad, are bad for our health, spiritual or social well being. Perhaps we consider the consequences to other people in the US or abroad, or to other species or the planet itself? Clarifying the usage of these many facets of the idea of good food will not only help students make more rational choices about what they eat, but will help them make more informed decisions about spending money, supporting various ethical concerns, voting and ultimately living. The course will be divided into seven roughly two-week units, beginning with personal meanings of good food and extending to larger social groups and broader scopes. Since few people rarely consider the unseen consequences of such a simple act as eating, this course is designed to increase awareness, stimulate concern and generate ideas about the role of food in a good society.

12:30 The Good City

Scholars identify the “urban revolution” as part of the dawn of human civilization. Since then, many have dreamed of creating the ideal city as a way to sustain the good life. Some real cities can lay claim to have approached such ideals. This course will begin with a sampling of urban visionaries including Plato, Thomas More, and Ebenezer Howard. It will progress by studying the claims of cities to have made human life better in one or more of four ways:

(1) The city as provider of good government
(2) The city as promoter of robust economies
(3) The city as builder of supportive communities
(4) The city as incubator of high culture

Participants will be asked to select one city and research its claim to have reached one or more of these ideals at a particular moment of its history. The goal of the course is to come to a better understanding of the contribution of urban life to the good life from the urban revolution until the present day. The course will also introduce the interdisciplinary perspectives of urban studies, drawing heavily on the theories and methods of the humanities and the social sciences.
12:30 Rhetoric(s) of Justice

The course examines the issue of justice as represented in literature and analyzes the reasons for the success (or failure) of justice. Specifically, we shall concern ourselves with questions such as: what is justice? Where does justice come from? How is justice represented or conveyed through language? This is a course in rhetorical and cultural analysis in which texts are read against a background of literary texts, drawn from a variety of genres and cultural contexts. The hope is that, by asking questions about justice of these divergent materials, they will prove mutually illuminating. We shall focus on the language of justice a particular writer inherits, including both the terms by which it is organized and the social practices it authorizes. Moreover, we shall attend to the writer’s transformations of that language in a particular text. Finally, we shall pay attention to the kind of community the text creates both with its reader and with those it talks about. This course addresses primarily the issues of politics, law, and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 (Honors) Educating for Curiosity

As the Pacific Seminar Reader put it, no culture can survive if it does not transmit its heritage and mores to new members, and no modern mass culture can survive without division of labor and hierarchies of command and obedience. Such needs require fundamentally authoritarian structures to support social stability. To fill this need, education must encourage obedience and develop the virtues of conformity. On the other hand, every culture must be able to adapt to changing circumstances. Such a purpose is fundamentally anti-authoritarian in support of social flexibility. It must encourage individuals to be self-directed and to develop the virtues of independence—including curiosity and creativity. This section of Pacific Seminar II will deepen our understanding of this tension by investigating curiosity and creativity. We will look at what curiosity is, what encourages it, what inhibits it, how it leads to creativity, and how creativity and curiosity can be radical in one generation but lead to the conformity in the next. We will look at examples in the arts, in the sciences, and in social, economic and political forums. We will run experiments to reveal our own curiosity and creativity. We will look at philosophical and empirical accounts that explain, justify and denigrate creativity. All the while, we will be keeping our eye on the social utility and danger of curiosity and creativity. The course will culminate in a substantial project, incorporating research of some kind that will engage the question, “Presuming we can, how should we manage curiosity and creativity to support a good society?”

12:30 Pain, Pleasure, Proximity

Why do humans seem drawn to artistic representations of pain? This course will examine how and why we take a certain complex pleasure in the proximity to pain offered by representations of violence, emotional distress, and physical suffering. But fear not: this is neither a dour dive into downer literature nor a course in the aesthetics of sadomasochism (which might disappoint some). Rather, it’s a course looking at how art plays a central role in enabling a “Good Society” to understand, survive, ameliorate, and transcend suffering. We’ll analyze James Cameron’s “Terminator 2” to see what it means
for cyber-monster-of-violence Arnold Schwarzenegger to be transformed into violently
good, cyber-daddy Ahnold, a sort of Tin Man for our apocalyptic times. We’ll read the
late Susan Sontag’s work on documentary photography to examine how snapshots of
suffering challenge us — and fail to challenge us — to access and address the suffering of
others. We’ll watch Bart and Lisa Simpson watching “The Itchy and Scratchy Show” to
analyze the comedy of violence and the violence of comedy. We’ll read Girl, Interrupted
(Susannah Kaysen) and Autobiography of a Face (Lucy Grealy) to explore how the best
memoirs about mental and physical suffering work as a kind of therapy for author and
reader, even as they move beyond the individualistic therapeutic model. Finally, we’ll
listen to and read about the blues, music whose “near-tragic, near-comic lyricism” the
novelist Ralph Ellison praised as a means to articulate and transcend the brutality of
American racism.

12:30 Mass Media and Popular Culture

This course introduces students to the field of mass media and cultural studies. The
course is designed to help students develop an ability to look critically at messages of
mass media including television, radio, internet, movies, and documentary as well as
media dependents such as advertising. The central focus of the course is on examining
how mass media messages play a role in our lives. Students will also be introduced to
mass media theories and the impacts of new media. The course has the following learning
objectives:

1) Understanding the American mass media and their powerful effects
2) Understanding the relationships between mass media and American culture
3) Developing critical thinking ability of analyzing media messages
4) Developing critical writing ability of analyzing media messages

12:30 Frankenstein’s Dreams

This course will explore the diverse alterations individuals make to their appearance or
performance in an effort to improve their social status. We will also investigate the
potential for science and technological innovations to influence the sort of changes
individuals may seek for themselves or their children in the future. The alterations we
discuss may be of a temporary sort, as occurs when athletes consume performance-
enhancing drugs, or permanent, as is the case when parents select for the sex and other
physical characteristics of their offspring. Students will be expected to rigorously
explore the potential impacts of such “enhancements” on human interactions and thus the
structure of our society. This course is intended to extend student inquiry from Pacific
Seminar I into the role of our civil interactions with one another and the natural world in
the making of a good society.

12:30 Crime, Punishment, and Justice

This course examines several questions related to the causes of criminal activities and
behaviors, the most effective ways to reduce the threat of crime in American society, and
the philosophical underpinnings of Western notions of justice. We will examine these questions from literary, philosophical, and sociological perspectives. In particular, we will define criminal behavior as it contrasts the "good" society, using the ideas of Plato and Dr. Martin Luther King. We will examine some of the causes of crime, especially the link between poverty and crime, psychological disorders and criminal behavior, and the influence of the media. In answering the question, "What measures reduce crime?" we will examine punishment and rehabilitation. Two classics, Camus' *The Stranger* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, will allow us to examine these issues from both a philosophical and a literary perspective.

12:30 Shaping our Energy Future

Skyrocketing demand (and price) for energy in rich and poor countries alike; limited oil supplies, most of which are located in politically volatile parts of the world; air pollution and harmful changes in the world's climate due to a heavy reliance on fossil fuels; the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the accidental exposure to radiation associated with the use of nuclear power—these are some of the issues raised by the way we currently acquire and consume energy. This course will explore the central role that energy plays in the functioning of modern society and the implications of the choices we make today to meet future energy needs. In so doing, we will touch upon issues that have important strategic, economic, environmental, diplomatic, political, technological and security implications. Accordingly, this course connects to the themes of nations in a global society and the human relation to the natural world in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 You've Got Class

In popular culture, education is often hailed as the great equalizer in American society. Obtaining a high school or college diploma is said to provide the credentials, experiences and cultural capital children need to live a fulfilling and successful life. This course will examine whether such claims ring true for American citizens, regardless of socioeconomic background, race or gender. To address such assertions, we will explore the social, cultural, political, economic, and historical trends in the United States that impact education. By reading social science research, articles from magazines and newspapers and viewing films, we will examine the relationship between society and education. Specifically, the course material will focus on the effect of the hidden curriculum; race, class and gender biases in education; curriculum differentiation; extracurricular activities and public policy issues such as the No Child Left Behind Act, Title IX, Proposition 209 and funding for education. This course connects primarily to the themes of education and politics, law, and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 Gender, Family, and Religion

Religion is a powerful influence on many Americans, often influencing the most intimate parts of a believer's life, including how gender and family are understood and practiced. This course will use gender analysis to examine the practices of followers of Islam and Christianity. We will focus upon how each religion constructs gender and how these
beliefs are practiced within a religious family. Questions we will explore include: what does gender mean to the believers within each tradition? How is gender performed or practiced within each tradition? How does gender, as understood through the lens of each religion, contribute to or influence other social institutions? This course will draw upon the methodologies of anthropology, feminist theory, masculinity studies, and religious studies in order to answer these questions. We will analyze each tradition in depth, recognizing the diversity within both Islam and Christianity. We will also compare them to one another, using family and gender as major analytical categories, keeping in mind that family greatly influences society. Ultimately, this course will call upon students to grapple with the complexity of religion, gender, family and society within a contemporary American context.

12:30 (Honors) Pseudo, Voodoo and Junk Science

This course will explore science, primarily from a psychological and consumerism/capitalism perspective, as it is understood, misunderstood, and misrepresented in media such as TV, movies, magazines, newspapers, internet, and books. We will begin with a general introduction to science, the scientific method, and the difference between science and pseudo-, voodoo, and junk sciences. The remainder of the course will focus on critically examining specific topics in psychology and science that illustrate pseudoscientific claims and methods of inquiry, e.g., ESP, neurolinguistic programming, and industry-biased research. Without the ability to critically evaluate “scientific claims,” we fall prey to anyone wishing to sell us goods or services, regardless of their efficacy, effectiveness, or even harmful qualities. Through videos, films, newspapers, magazines (e.g., The Skeptical Inquirer), journal articles, and books (e.g., Why People Believe Weird Things), students will develop their ability to think critically about science. The underlying assumption of this course is that a good society is an educated society and one that does not become easy prey to pseudoscientific claims. This course connects primarily to the themes of education and the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 The American Dream

From the beginning, America was built to be “a city on the hill,” a beacon of light, a shining example of what constitutes a good society held up for the rest of the world’s view. Yet this “city” was built on a dream—the American Dream. But what is this Dream? Many have tried to define it, but the dream has taken as many shapes and forms as the dreamers themselves. Some might argue it is the promise of rags to riches success. But what is this success? Can it be measured by the accumulation of wealth and prosperity? Others might say it is the pursuit of happiness and the freedom to live within a good society. But what is this pursuit of happiness and freedom to live? What if our ideas clash? Does everyone have equal access to this dream of freedom and happiness? And are some allowed to “dream” more than others? If so, why? In this course we will discuss these questions and examine the many forms the American Dream has taken within our society, including, but not limited to, freedom and liberty, equality, wealth, power, love, family, community, education, justice, a meaningful life, and the pursuit of happiness. We will also see how it informs our notion of what is a “good” and “bad”
society and explore how this dream can sometimes turn into nightmare. Students will be required to read various essays and literary texts that inform the discussion throughout the semester, but the primary focus will be on the “reading” and screening of American films (and some television shows) such as Rocky, Pretty Woman and T2. Throughout the semester, students will also be taught how to make a short film from pre-production to post-production. For the final group project students will be asked to divide into crews and participate in the making of a short film that elaborates and/or comments on the theme of the American Dream and the Good Society as discussed in class.

12:30 Learning and Ways of Knowing

Learning is a lot more than acquiring information. It also involves understanding the strengths and weaknesses of what can be known in the three main areas of knowledge—natural science, social science, and the humanities. What is truth in each area? What tools do we use to think in each area? What are the standards for knowledge in each area? How do you know you know? You will reflect on what knowledge in each area means, how to think in each area, and standards for determining truthfulness. You will be expected to address these understandings reflectively in your writing. The course relates primarily to the issues of education and civil society in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 Business, Government, Society

This course addresses the question of how business activity affects our concept of a good society under conditions of cultural diversity, interest group pluralism, and global market competition. Business activity is influential in every sphere of society including the national and global markets, cultural activities and political-governmental policy. Each sphere is influenced and exercises influence over the other two spheres. Business provides employment for people, goods in the marketplace and tax support for the government. What is the social responsibility of business? How do issues like family-employment conflict, environmental degradation, global sweatshops, and local economic development get resolved? How can society control business to assure sustainable economic development and responsible use of natural resources? Does business exert undue influence on public policy? This course connects primarily to the themes of civil society and politics, law and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 The Value of Truth

Truth has been under assault from many directions in recent years. Postmodernists attempt to undermine truth by attacking the very idea of an objective, mind-independent Reality. Corporate lobbyists and their politicians attempt to hide the truth by silencing scientists and critics. The mainstream media drowns important news items in a sea of “infotainment” pieces. The once firm boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, propaganda and news, and fraud and honest labor all seem to be failing. And now we’re told that even reality television is not real! Does truth not matter anymore? Why should we care about truth and truthfulness? How is this devaluation of truth affecting our relations to one another? Can a society really be free and democratic if it does not value
truth? This course attempts to answer these questions by examining source materials
from multiple media (e.g., videos, newspaper articles, audio clips, novels, and
philosophical essays). This seminar connects most directly to the themes of education,
civil society, and politics, law and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 Ecology and Latin America

This course will examine the relationships between people and their natural environment in Latin America with a special emphasis on the representations of the natural environment in Latin American literature and film. Ecology and the impact of men and women on their natural surroundings have become central topics of discussion in Latin American culture and society. The discussion topics for the course include 1) the various manifestations of the natural environment in Latin American cultural texts, 2) the study of ecofeminism and the relationship between the subjugation of women and the domination of nature, 3) human accountability to Latin America’s natural resources, 4) and the natural environment as a living entity that influences Latin American culture and policy. Some of the cultural texts to be studied in this course include the novels The Book of Lamentations by Rosario Castellanos (Mexico) and Leafstorm by Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia) and the films The Garden of Eden by María Novaro (Mexico) and The Hour of the Star by Suzana Amaral (Brazil).

12:30 Avant-Garde Art and Politics

What is “avant-garde” art? It has been described as shocking, negative, and violent, but also innovative and idealistic, even utopian. This course will examine the history and theory of avant-garde artistic practices. We will locate the beginning of vanguard art in Europe in the late nineteenth century, when many painters began to renounce conventional aesthetic and market practices. We will then move to investigate the formation in the first decades of the twentieth century of more radically anti-traditional artistic groups. Finally we will consider whether the function of the avant-garde changed later in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Chief among the themes of the course will be the relationship between a society’s avant-garde art and its politics. Most twentieth-century avant-garde groups wanted to “reinvest art into life.” Artists made objects that looked strange and exciting, but they considered their work a trenchant analysis of contemporary political and social situations, not an ivory tower experiment in form. In fact, the avant-garde often imagined its objects destined not for museum walls, but actually useful in the daily lives of ordinary people. Such objects ranged from scathing montages designed to alert citizens to the true nature of their governments, to functional objects such as furniture or clothing intended to transform the user’s political beliefs. These artists thought that by heightening their viewers’ political consciousness, their work could play a critical role in shaping society. Alongside politics, other issues surrounding avant-garde art that we will consider include the writing of manifestos, the development of new media, the exploitation of literature, photography, and film, the role of the body and sexuality, and the use of innovative distribution and exhibition practices. Movements we will study include Futurism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Surrealism, the Bauhaus, International Situationism, British punk, and postmodern architecture. This
course connects to the themes of civil society and politics, law, and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 **Utopian Futures**

Dreaming up utopias is a way some authors try to imagine and define “the Good Society.” The word “utopia” was originally coined from two Greek terms, “eutopia” which means “the good place” and “outopia” which means “nowhere.” Authors who write utopian fictions are often caught between both meanings of this word. They optimistically imagine “the good place”—a society with just the right economics, politics, culture and technology to ensure a harmonious good life for all its people—while pessimistically realizing that such a perfect world may only be possible in the imagination, that it is literally “nowhere” in the real world. Lewis Mumford thus calls utopias “the ultimate in human folly or human hope.” This course will explore the way both historical authors and modern-day science fiction authors have tried to imagine the Good Society by creating fictional utopian societies, often set in the future. We will be reading texts, as well as analyzing some film and video. We will critically explore why utopias get written the way they do, analyzing the way individual utopias reflect the cultural context from which they emerged.

12:30 **(Honors) Divided By Faith**

When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in 1830 he described the unique American tension of religion and democracy as a “harmonization of heaven and earth.” One might suspect that if Tocqueville returned today and witnessed the searing inferno of rhetoric regarding church and state he might invoke a different metaphor. Although church and state are kept separate by the US Constitution, religion and politics are often connected in a number of ways and mutually influence each other. A glance at the major news stories of the past year—Supreme Court nominees, justification of war, and stem cell research—shows that American society continues to live in the tension of the first amendment. This course will be rooted in the first amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” This brilliant statement has been interpreted in a number of ways and still leaves us with the question: where is the proper place for religion in American society? Issues of the necessary relationship between church and state were debated by the Founding Fathers and are still hotly contested today in number of settings. Students will be asked to enter into the Church/State debate and to think creatively about how to form a better society. They will examine contributions from Native American traditions, religious thinkers and activists, constitutional framers and theorists, and the implications of significant court decisions. Historical and contemporary church/state dilemmas will be examined and critiqued as we seek to form a more civil society. This course connects most closely to the themes of civil society and politics, law, and citizenship in Pacific Seminar I.

12:30 **Science and Ethics of Stem Cells**
One of the most intricate, polarizing and controversial topic of scientific discussion is the use of stem cells for therapeutic purposes. Stem cells are self-regenerating cells that can be derived from either an adult or an embryo. Whilst adult cells are capable of generating more cells of the same “type” (for example, more skin cells from an adult skin stem cell), embryonic stems cells are pluripotent and can be “programmed” to generate a variety of different types of cells (for example, skin or muscle or nerve etc.). This provides incredible potential as one could conceivably generate blood cells from embryonic stem cells and use these to treat patients with blood-related diseases such as leukemia. Given this remarkable multi-potent property of the embryonic stems cells, scientists have been trying to attain and grow them in labs to gain the potential of generating cells of any type. The caveat is that human embryos that are created in vitro (i.e. outside a woman’s body and in a lab) need to be sacrificed to collect these cells. Herein lies the debate: is it ethically and morally acceptable to create and sacrifice human embryos just for attaining stem cells? Answers to these questions not just test our intellect but also our beliefs in the creation of life and our abilities to integrate the advancements in science with our culture. We will discuss this “hot-button” issue of stem cells and debate the scientific and ethical issues associated with the isolation and use of embryonic stem cells.